Minutes of the 1/2006 meeting of the University Education Committee (UEC) held at 9.30am on Wednesday 1 March 2006 in lecture room 5 of Building 20.

Present:

Prof R Castle (Chair)  Prof D Griffiths
A/Prof I Brown  Dr G Lefoe
Dr A Abraham  Dr J Skillen
A/Prof D Considine  Ms M Jantti
A/Prof R Albury  Mr S Riddiford
Prof S Wills  A/Prof R Vickers
A/Prof K Maxwell  A/Prof J McQuilton
A/Prof D Vance  A/Prof T Bryant
Prof J Knowles  Dr A Abraham
A/Prof F Naghdy  A/Prof S Dodds
A/Prof H Yeatman  Dr A Abraham
Ms R Collins  Ms E Kerr
A/Prof G Hampton
A/Prof B Walker
Ms N Conyer

In Attendance:  Ms J Payne (Executive Officer), Mr C Mowbray (Policy & Governance).

PART A  Preliminary Business

A1  Welcome, Apologies and Leave of Absence

Apologies were received from Mr Chris Edmondson, Dr David Christie and Ms Bronwyn James. Ms James will be on study leave throughout Autumn session 2006, during which time she will be represented by Dr Jan Skillen.

The Chair welcomed a number of new members to the UEC:
- Ms Margie Jantti, Chair, Quality Assurance Subcommittee and Library representative
- Prof Julian Knowles, FEC Chair, Faculty of Creative Arts
- A/Prof Kay Maxwell, FEC Chair, Faculty of Law
- Dr Jan Skillen, Student Services
- Ms Natalie Conyer, Director, Wollongong University College
- Dr Geraldine Lefoe, CEDIR.

Outgoing members Mr Paul O’Halloran and Ms Lynn Wright were thanked for their contributions to the Committee.
A2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved 2006/1

That the minutes of the UEC meeting of 7 December 2005 are confirmed as a true record of the proceedings of that meeting.

A3 Business Arising from the Minutes

A/Prof B Walker advised that she should be included in the apologies from the last meeting. Mr S Riddiford noted that he should be added as present.

A4 Starring of Items

(i) No additional items were starred for discussion.

A5 Chair’s Report

Carrick Institute Teaching Awards
The Chair reported that he attended a meeting regarding the Carrick Institute Awards on 27 February which was aimed at providing further information about the Awards. Further clarification about a number of elements of the Awards is still desired however and will be sought from the Institute.

The Chair recently contacted Deans and Heads of Units seeking the nomination of suitable applicants for the Carrick Citations for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning. 210 Citation Awards of $10,000 will be allocated for various contributions to student learning.

The Chair also noted that he has been appointed a member of the Standing Committee for Competitive Grants through the Carrick Institute.

PART B BUSINESS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES

B5 Teaching Facilities Subcommittee

Prof Sandra Wills, A/g Chair noted that it is pleasing teaching space has been identified as a category in the 2006 Carrick Awards this year.

B6 Excellence, Diversity and Innovation in Teaching Subcommittee

A/Prof Rebecca Albury reported that OCTAL applications have been received and will now be considered by the panel.

A call for submissions for the ESDF grants has been circulated across the University.

PART C GENERAL BUSINESS

C1 Equity Project

Ms Yvonne Kerr spoke to her presentation reporting on progress of the Education Strategic Development Project on Student Equity. The Project Team has undertaken a broad range of research to date exploring student equity rates at UOW and other Australian Universities, UOW attrition rates, and the level of awareness of Student Services.
Research indicates that a low proportion of UOW’s student population is comprised of students of low socio-economic status. The recent increase in HECS fees has potential to further lower this proportion and should be monitored. The proportion of a number of other student equity groups at UOW is also of concern.

Research has also identified the first third of a students University program to be the crucial time where students are more likely to drop out. Introduction of a tracking system identifying reasons for student attrition would be beneficial in addressing attrition issues. Attrition rates are currently an important component of the Teaching and Learning Performance Fund.

Various steps have already been taken to increase the focus on student equity across UOW. Every faculty now has trend data relating to their equity groups and is required to report on student equity as part of the planning process.

Based on information received to date, the Project Team is currently considering a range of strategies in order to address the various equity issues which have been identified. Strategies being considered include the development of a Student Equity Framework, recruitment and outreach projects to attract equity students, a range of policy issues, staff awareness and training, equity initiative grants for staff and mentor programs.

C2  E-Learning Project

Prof Sandra Wills reported that the new Learning Management system WebCT Vista had been successfully rolled out this Session following a trial run through Summer Session 2005/2006. Technically the system has been working well, with only a minor problem arising to date affecting only a small number of users.

Interviews and surveys conducted through Summer session provided positive feedback on the new system, with students and staff indicating they were comfortable using it.

The system is a positive direction for e-Learning at UOW and provides a good opportunity by which to further improve e-teaching.

C3  Teaching and Learning Fund priorities

Prof Rob Castle spoke to his presentation about the Teaching and Learning Fund priorities. He noted that priorities for the year will be dependent upon feedback received through the final AUQA report, which is due currently due to be released on 15 March. Initial feedback from AUQA has been quite positive in regards to Teaching and Learning however.

Prof Castle noted that there are a range of Teaching and Learning related challenges facing UOW in 2006. These include:

- Addressing equity and access issues – this is being explored through the student equity project
- Using off-campus teaching methods on the University
- Academic Integrity – This is being addressed through an Academic Senate Project being led by Yvonne Kerr and A/Prof Damien Considine
- Teaching awards
- Dissemination of new ideas on Teaching and Learning

Of the $5.1 million UOW received through the Teaching and Learning Performance Fund in 2005, $3 million has been allocated to the Capital Development fund for the expansion of the Library. It is planned that the remaining funding will be spent over three years.
Projects being considered for funding include Innovations to improve Teaching and Learning delivery, Carrick Institute, Project focussed on Teaching and Learning improvements, Employment outcomes and small teaching space upgrades. Some funding will be allocated towards a project officer to support staff applying for Teaching Awards.

PART D OTHER BUSINESS AND TABLED ITEMS

D1 Other/Late Business

No other late items were received.

D2 Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 9.30-11.30am Wednesday 18 April 2006.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.45am.

Julia Payne
Executive Officer
UEC